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Themed Section: Introduction: 'Home' Environments: Crime, Victimisation and Safety

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For some, a place of safety and security, for others a place of fear and harm – 'home' can be a physical place or a state of mind. Criminology has given considerable attention to space and location in relation to crime, offending, and victimisation and this has seen space as socially constructed as well as physically shaped and bounded. This attention has extended to consider the domestic sphere as significant, but on the whole this has focused on domestic violence and abuse where the home has become a place of unsafety. In this respect, criminological attention on the home environment has been considerable and such work emerges out of feminist-influenced concerns about women and children and the gendered nature of such abuse.

This themed section extends the concept 'Home' such that it has a wider criminological and victimological reach to it. The articles focus on other aspects of the home that are worthy of criminological interest. We consider the way 'home' has an elastic meaning. At times as emphasise the unsafe, insecure, conflictual and contested space and environment that is home for many. In other contexts 'home' is increasingly seen as significant in terms of safety, security, well-being, and rehabilitation. Space precludes including an even wider variety of articles that more fully reflects the different conceptualisations of home that we have thought about. Homes where people are cared for – and sometimes abused within – by non-family members for example, or institutions which become people's home away from home. Prisons, educational establishments, hospitals, clinics and reform institutions, sanctuary and refuge provisions which provide temporary accommodation as a place of safety, might all fall within the ambit of a themed section with the title 'Home' Environments: Crime, Victimisation and Safety. This themed section offers three original articles that begin to illustrate how 'home' conjures up a variety of criminological imaginaries.

The 2017 fire at Grenfell Tower – a multiple occupancy accommodation block – in London, resulted in the deaths of 72 people. In the first article in this themed section, Steve Tombs illustrates how 'home' can be

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the site of corporate criminality and offending. The focus is on the aftermaths and consequences of the Grenfell Tower fire; but this focus also reveals the presence and character of the factors, which, in combination, helped to produce a fire that could have such devastating effects. Tombs delineates the various, discrete ways in which distinct types of harms – physical, emotional and psychological, cultural and relational, and financial and economic – have been, and will continue to be, produced by a combination of State and corporate acts and omissions. Some of these are readily apparent, others of these are opaque and obscured. On the basis of these explorations of the range of social harms produced by the fire at Grenfell Tower, Tombs concludes by showing how failures to mitigate these constitutes one manifestation of the more general phenomenon named by Engels (1844/1993) as 'social murder'.

A second article by the current authors (Davies and Rowe) entitled 'Towards a Criminology of the Domestic' acknowledges that ideas about 'space' and 'place' have informed environmental criminology but have largely been applied to the public realm. As many feminist, and other critics have argued, until recently criminal justice overlooked abuse and violence against women and girls because it was conceived as a 'domestic' problem, so not in the domain of the police and other agencies. Apart from that, the important critical work done in that context, the status of home, and the domestic, has been largely neglected within criminology. Our article outlines wider socio-technological trends that mean that this lacuna needs to be addressed. First, as a site of criminal victimisation, it is argued that – following critical work around domestic abuse – a wider understanding of the nature of the domestic environment in the experiences of criminal victimisation is overdue. In particular, it is noted that online victimisation means that the physical spatial understanding of the domestic needs to be reconsidered. This takes up Campbell's (2016) challenge that criminology needs to develop more sophisticated models of place and space. Second, the status of the domestic as a site of offending behaviour is considered, particularly in relation to changing patterns of consumption and leisure activity and the opportunities to offend in relation to these from within the domestic arena.

The third article in the themed section examines the refuge-sanctuary theme in relation to young runaways whose escape from home might be seen as an act of resistance and quest for emancipation. 'Home' as we have introduced, invokes complex and ambiguous meanings for social policy, and issues of safety within and beyond the home are further complicated when consideration is given to the experiences of young people 'on the move', who run away or absent themselves from the family home or alternative care. Margaret Malloch and Paul Rigby's article explores what the experiences of these young people might bring to an understanding of the relationship between home and safety and considers how gendered and classed youth identities impact on responses and interventions aimed at creating effective forms of refuge. Considering theoretical aspects of running away and youth journeys, the article engages with issues of space, place, and relations of exclusion, subordination, and domination in

relation to family and State powers and responsibilities. Journeys from home can be viewed interchangeably as escape routes and dangerous endeavours, but can also denote acts of resistance and quests for emancipation.

Together, the three articles that comprise this themed section embrace Campbell's (2016) suggestion that three-dimensional and social models of place and space need to be more fully developed if criminology is to better elucidate emerging challenges as crime and social harm transverse social spaces in ways previously neglected by much criminology. We highlight two common and interconnected threads that stand out from the collection as a whole in respect of the title of our themed section: 'Home' Environments: Crime, Victimisation and Safety. First, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary contributions to conceiving 'home' environments advance our understanding of home as a physical and geographical space. Such environments become meaningful 'places' through 'relational' dimensions. The latter emerges as the second thread. The relational ties people, through social bonds, to 'home'. Each contribution, whether explicitly or implicitly, invokes a conceptualisation of 'home' as 'relational'.

Familial ties, neighbourly and community dimensions give meaning and significance to understandings of home. Tombs, for example, in his outline of the concept of State-corporate crime, reminds the reader that the concept directs our attention towards the way in which deviant organisational outcomes are not discrete acts, but rather the outcome of relationships between different social institutions. The concept emphasises, therefore, the relational character of the State and the powerful potential for the production of socially injurious actions. Tombs's article illustrates how relational harms follow from mistrust of central and local government. Malloch and Rigby continue with the critique of the power of the State which succeeds in masking the very foundations of social and economic inequality. The criminological gaze must disrupt the political illusion of what constitutes 'decent home life' and thus limit the power of the State to obfuscate its role in facilitating harm and preventing young people from being safe and sound. Davies and Rowe tie the two threads together in arguing for an appreciation of the relational geographies of online and offline behaviour. For us, social understanding of space that pays attention to the ways in which particular environments are used, experienced and perceived in relational terms, rather than defining them in two-dimensional cartographical terms, justifies us arguing for a criminology of the domestic.

References

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